

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Tuesday, July 8. 1707.

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**I** Am now coming to talk to you about our Misfortunes, about our ill Successes. GOD be prais'd, we have of late had little to talk of but Victories, recovering of Losses, taking Towns, Provinces and Kingdoms; Bonfires and ringing of Bells, has been our constant Diversion, and good News has glutted our Ears; of which I spoke last Paper.

Now, Gentlemen, in all your Joy, you have something to consider of, and if this *Review* be a little more serious than ordinary, I hope you will bear with it, for the Scripture says, *in the Time of Adversity consider.*

To look back therefore upon our modern Behaviour a little, under all the good News we had, what think ye now, were you not more joyful than thankful?

I took Notice in a *Review* last Summer,

N<sup>o</sup>. . . . of the Behaviour of the *French* under their Losses; and from hence, if my Observations are a little surprizing, as I noted in my last, pray, bear with me, Gentlemen, I'll bring you to rights again at the Conclusion, and answer all Objections at bringing a *Papist* Example on the Stage.

The *French* upon their surprizing Losses took a Course—that, let their Superstition be what it will, their Manner what it will, their Sincerity what it will, cannot however but be approv'd by all Men, that have the least Sence of a supream Hand guiding the Affairs of the World—And this was to proclaim a solemn Fast, a Day of Humiliation and Sorrow, a Day of Repentance, of Sackcloth and Mourning, to appease the Wrath of Heaven, *and turn him away from his fierce Anger, that they perish not, Jona 3, 9.*

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I have nothing to do to enquire about their Manner, their praying to this or that Saint, or to enquire about the Idolatry of setting up other Mediators, *than that one Mediator Christ Jesus*; let the Gentlemen of the Gown debate that: But this I am sure of, and any body may be Divine enough for this; *Nineveh* was a City of as much Wickedness as *Paris*, and the *Ninevites* as much Idolaters as the *French*, and they were afterwards destroy'd by God's Judgments for their Wickedness—But yet in what Manner soever they pray'd and humbled themselves, *they did it so*, that GOD heard them, and adjourn'd his Vengeance for some Years upon their Humiliation; and for this I refer to the Text; and let such that think GOD has no Regard to the National Humiliation of those, to whom yet he may have no saving Regard, take that of *Nineveh* for a Precedent.

Well, Gentlemen, *France* proclaim'd a Fast, the Words of the Proclamation are very remarkable, where the Reasons and Nature of the Humiliation is describ'd; it was printed in the *Daily Courant*, which at this Distance I can but refer to, and I wish, the Author of the *Courant* would oblige the World again with it; for 'tis very well worth reviewing, the first Part especially.

Upon this solemn Fast, which as I have been inform'd, was kept after their Way with an unusual Solemnity, and the People strangely affected with; let us examine, what has been the Dealings of Providence with that Nation, and what the Success of it, I doubt, less humbled Confederates?

First, pray observe, Gentlemen, the *French* were under strong Apprehensions of a Descent upon their own Country, an Invasion of the *English* and *Dutch* Troops, the Army was on Board, the vast Stores, the Train, the Ammunition so great, that nothing less than a powerful Invasion of *France* was expected, both by them and by us, and some People here boasted no less of the Success of it; whether it was design'd thither or no, is not to my Purpose; but this is very remarkable, the visible Hand of Providence gave the Negative to that Expedition—Heaven stamp'd his own Authority upon the Disappointment, and let us see plainly, it

was his Will, that Expedition should not go on.

Now, tho' Days and Minutes signify nothing, but to guide our Thoughts to the Causes of, and the Hand directing Things, and I claim to be understood to put no positive Conclusion upon it, and had there been no Humiliation-Day in *France*, it might have been the same thing; yet it cannot but be very pointing, that the same Day the general Humiliation was observ'd in *France*, and that whole Kingdom was praying against an *English* Invasion, which was the Judgment they fear'd; that very Day the Confederate Fleet was driven back into *Torbay* by contrary Winds, lay there Wind-bound about 14 Weeks, till the Season of Action was over, and could never obtain a Wind afterward for that Expedition.

And what's the Use I shall make of this, think you now? To encourage Superstition, Processions, and the Mediatorship of nominal Saints? Far from it I assure you; and whoever draws Consequences of that Nature from it, may as well draw Consequences to justify Panagism from the *Ninevites* Repentance; but several good Observations, I say, may be made of it.

1. If you do not out-pray the *French*, as well as out-fight them, you will never beat them.

2. If the *French* should humble themselves before their Maker, tho' it be but a *Ninevite* Repentance; if they turn every Man from their evil Way, and from the Violence which is in their Hands—GOD may, as in the Case of *Nineveh*, adjourn their Punishment, and turn from his fierce Anger, that they perish not; and if they fall not by you, you must fall by them.

And what if I should observe, that GOD in his Providence seems to distinguish in the present War, between the *French* tyrannizing, and the *French* tyranniz'd over—And while wonderful Successes have been granted the Confederates against the Armies and Projects of *France*, as a Kingdom, the same Successes have been deny'd us against the poor Subjects, as a People; who already sufficiently oppress'd, would be quite undone upon an Invasion, and the Prayers of these poor People have hitherto been heard,

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in that always our Designs upon the Coasts of *France* have come to very little, *but it is by the Way*.

Any Body would expect, that the Application of this should naturally fall into an earnest Exhortation to a general Humiliation and publick National Repentance; I shall be very glad to have any Body, that is fitter for that Work than I, and whose proper Business it is, to take up that Task—As for me, I only represent this to them.

1. If GOD heard the Prayers of the *Ninevites*, who were Idolaters, and whose City in another Place is call'd the bloody City, he may hear the *Papish* Prayers of the *French*.—And if he will hear such Peoples Prayers against us, I hope, we have a great deal more reason to believe he will hear *England*, if she were but in the same Degree of Application for about the Work.

2. While *France* prays all, and *Britain* prays none, I mean nationally, I expect no more Victories.

3. When *Israel* fled before the Heathen, let any Man but see, what was the proper Business of the greatest General the World ever saw, I mean, Lieutenant General *Joshuah*?

And now I leave the Subject to the Divines only make a Remark or two; *England* has one thing to encourage her in this Work, that she has not been always us'd to; and that is Her Majesty's Example, who in all Cases is the first in Thanksgiving, and the first in Days of Fasting, and gives both Directions and Example to her Subjects in this Case; and it will be none of Her Majesty's Fault, if all her People do not fight their Enemies with these pointed and prevailing Weapons.

And here I could very freely enter into an Enquiry, whether it seems likely, that GOD will quite finish the Deliverance and Peace of *Europe* by this Alliance, or no?—Whether the Confederates are right sorted, or no? And whether there are not yet greater Convulsions and Revolutions in View in *Europe*, than have yet been seen? My own Opinion, I confess, is, that it is so, and I could give a great many Reasons for it.—The House of *Austria* and the House of *Bourbonne* have been in their Turn equally Disturbers of

*Europe*, Persecutors and Enemies to the Protestant Religion, and now the two Potsherds are dashing themselves to pieces one against another, and I am perswaded, will be both broken; but of this I shall be larger hereafter.

The present Design of this Paper, however, *some may think it impertinent in me, neither whose Business or Talent is preaching* to observe, now our *English Israel* has turned her Back, and fled before the Enemy, to do just as *Joshua* did—And when you ask, it I mean to *be on our Faces and pray*, I beseech you, take this along with you; remember, *Joshua* fought as well as pray'd, and so must we; *England* is not us'd to be discourag'd for the Loss of one Battle, nor is there such mighty Cause of Discouragement, because one Army is beaten; you must do as *Joshua* did, nay, do so far as the *Iren* do, fight and pray; when one Army is beaten, you must send another; the Cause cannot, it must not, and Thanks be to GOD, it need not be given up; the *French* must win a great many such Battles to retrieve one *Ramellies*, and one *Turin*; all this will be recover'd, only more Time may be required to it.

And now I am talking of fighting and praying, it puts me in Mind of an old Soldier, I think it was Major General *Skippon*, in the Civil Wars here, when King *Charles* 1. had cou'd up the Army of the Parliament in the *West*, and the Generals made a most dishonourable Escape by Sea, and left the Army to surrender at Discretion; when at a Council of War it was propos'd to do so, the old Major General, who commanded the Infantry, refus'd to leave his Charge, but would take Part and Share with the Soldiers, and exclaim'd against *Essex* and others, that were for going away.

Why, what would you have us do? said some of the Generals—Do, says the OLD IAD! Do like Christians and *English* Men, pray well and fight well, and I'll warrant, says he, we break thro' them—The old Man was for charging thro' and thro', and fighting his Way out, but he was for praying to GOD at the same time.

I'll make no Applications, Gentlemen, but this; We are brought to no Straights yet, GOD be prais'd; we must recruit; we must send